



Tulsa Radio Memories

KTOW 1340 AM and 102.3 FM
Country & Weird Music + Sports

(from Guestbook 154) **Chris Kelly** said:

Found this [KTOW-AM jingle](#) (.wav file) on an old reel. Thought you might like to add it to the collection. This was during their country days circa 1970-71.

Did you know that, in 1967, there was to have been a [KTOW-TV](#), UHF Channel 29, with [Ike Horn](#) as one of the owners?

KTOW-AM's call letters stood for 'K The Old West', according to Mike Bruchas.

(from GB 193) **David Perkins** said re **KTOW radio, 1967**

I was just surfing the net and was trying to remember exactly where KTOW was in **Sand Springs**. I lived in Tulsa and was the morning man and would drive through the oil refineries on the way to the station. Every morning I'd try to hold my breath,

APPEARING DAILY

Larry Gatlin
George Lindsey
Donna Fargo
Roy Head
Freddie Fender
Jody Miller
Waylon & Willie
Don Williams
Buck Trent
Kenny Rogers
Barbara Fairchild
Crystal Gayle
Oak Ridge Boys
Ray Price
Joe Stampley
Elvis Presley
Emmy Lou Harris
Tammy Wynette
Anne Murray
Asleep At The Wheel
Mel Tillis
Hank Thompson
Roy Clark
Jimmy Buffett
Humble Miliap
Linda Ronstadt
Randy Garley
Johnnie Lee Wills
Rick Nelson

ktow

Modern Country
FM Stereo
Album Country
92 Stereo FM 1340 AM
For more information
call 622-KTOW

— This Roy Clark, Hank Thompson, Jim Hickey Station —

but about halfway there I'd begin to gag on the smell.

Anyway as I remember, Paul Cannon was the PD and did the afternoon drive time. We played good old country music. I left to come to my hometown of Fort Worth on KBUY and was told later that when the ratings came out Paul was number one in the afternoons and I got number one in the mornings. Guess if I'd known that I'd have stuck around a little longer.

I did enjoy my time at KTOW and in Tulsa. Retired now, I do a little preaching here and there.



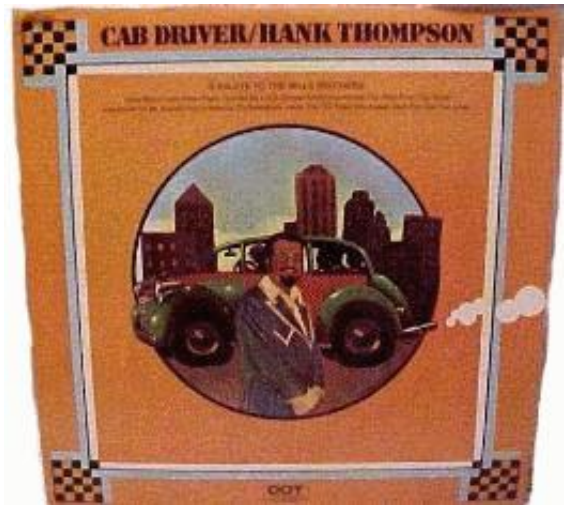
The radio frequency term "kilocycles" (k.c.) was replaced by Hertz (Hz) by the 1970s.

(from GB 255) **Bob O'Shea said of Hank Thompson:**

I too mourn the passing of who Hunter S. Thompson would have called, 'one of God's own prototypes'. He only made one Hank Thompson. Hank 'The Hired Hand' Thompson, a Princeton graduate with a degree in electrical engineering, in his very polite, unique way, stomped on the terra! What a magnificent example of talent and originality. Like Garth Brooks, a white buffalo who only comes along once or twice in a lifetime. Who can he be compared to? The answer really is nobody. God just didn't make anymore Hank Thompsons.

I worked for Hank when I came home to Tulsa in 1974. My first radio job in the market was in Sand Springs at **KTOW**. Hank owned a piece of the operation. He was a nice man with a love for music as only a musician like Hank could have. He loved performing, he loved the fans and he loved his friends. He and [Billy Parker](#) had a wonderful relationship. Billy always spoke very highly of Hank. I'm proud to have been not only able to play many of his songs throughout my radio career but to have introduced him on stage and to have personally known him.

Hank Thompson didn't like funerals. In fact, he requested there not be a funeral for him. Rather, Hank Thompson wanted family, fans and friends to meet at Billy Bob's in Ft. Worth for a celebration of life. Not what one would typically expect from a Princeton graduate. Hank Thompson was one of us to the very end of this life. Mr. Postman, please forward all future fan mail to: Mr. Hank Thompson, Brazos Valley, Heaven.



[Hank Thompson's](#) tribute to the Mills Brothers. Cover by [Gailard Sartain](#).

(from GB 193) **Neal Hallford said:**

In a fit of nostalgia, I've been browsing the web today and came across the entries about KTOW radio in Sand Springs. I thought I'd throw in a bit more about the station as I knew it, way back in the good ol' days.

In the early 1980s, a good friend of mine named Ron Bolinger was working at the station, and talked the programming director there into letting me intern. As it turned out, it was a life-changing experience, and I became a regular DJ shortly after my graduation from high school in 1984.

At the time, KTOW was an AM outfit playing country and western, with a daytime emphasis on the "older stuff" (i.e. Patsy Cline, Bob Wills, Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb). (Ron and I and a few of the other DJs often secretly called our format "stone age country".) When we weren't playing the classics, we occasionally mixed in contemporary stuff ranging from Alabama and the Oak Ridge Boys to artists who would later be considered pop or rock "crossovers" like Olivia Newton John and the Eagles.

KTOW also carried a great deal of sports. I spent a lot of time punching carts during the commercial

breaks for the Kansas City Royals Baseball and Sandite (Charles Page High School) football. We also broadcast Kentucky Derby race results.

The oddest thing about KTOW's format, however, was that for a brief while, we became a satellite repeater for a Chicago pop station. This posed some interesting challenges for those of us working at the engineering board. How does one gracefully segue between "Take Me Back to Tulsa" and "Do You Really Want to Hurt Me" by Boy George? It was a very weird time for the station's format, but it was also part of its uniquely small town charm.

Of course, the peculiarities of the station's format also allowed for us dee-jays to express ourselves in unique ways. Ron Bolinger and I irregularly produced a series of weird tales radio dramas called "Uncharted Regions," and we aired them on and off between 1984 and 1989. The first was "Shadow of the Bulldog Man," a War of the Worlds-inspired broadcast based on a local Sand Springs legend. The show climaxed with a simulated attack on station DJ Mark Maxey, and we shut off the transmitter for fifteen minutes. (We thankfully didn't start any riots, but we did get a phone call or two asking about Mr. Maxey's well-being.)

Even when we weren't doing full-fledged dramas, Ron and I had a flair for weirdness. My early Sunday morning program was called "Chickenbusters" and featured phoned in reports of alien chickens and other audio gags. For the midnight weather report, Ron and I would also occasionally "broadcast" from somewhere exotic, so the local Sand Springs weather would be read from locales like Transylvania (complete with howling wolves and bats) and politically questionable locales like Belfast (accompanied with machine gun fire and explosions). Mark Maxey, who had helped with the original "Bulldog" broadcast was also known for his shenanigans, but his on-air joke about Oral Roberts later got him booted from the station.

Of course, Ron, Mark, and I weren't the only interesting characters working at KTOW. Our program director was a very good DJ named Mike Graham who also happened to be completely blind. Every knob, button, and record in the station was labelled in Braille, a factor which always surprised visitors to the station. Another DJ owned a record store in Crystal City, and frequently sported a full Elvis pompadour.

In 1987 I officially moved off to finish my journalism degree at the University of Oklahoma, but maintained my connections with the station as Ron and I continued to produce "Uncharted Regions" on our own. On Halloween of 1989 we aired our last episode, "October Harvest", on a very different KTOW. In the years while I was away, KTOW had changed ownership and direction. It went from an AM only C&W station to an AM/FM outfit playing alternative/indie rock. It was still gloriously consistently inconsistent, which was one of the things I had loved about the station when I first ran across it.

Ironically, it was the scripts I'd written for our strange little radio dramas that later opened the door to a career in computer game design. As a result, I still feel like KTOW is with me, and sometimes wish I could go back and sit behind the mike just one more time. It's a great Tulsa memory.

(from Guestbook 5) **Erick Church said:**

KTOW-FM, 102.3 has had many formats. One of a few that come to mind are alternative rock in the early 90's (at the time there was no "alternative" it was called "Indie"). Later, it became urban contemporary, and classic country. It took the classic country format, and the call letter KTFX in 1994. Before that, the KTFX call letters were used by 103.3. Now, the former KTOW/KTFX is KRTQ, or Rock 102.3...basically a 80s and 90s rock station.

(from GB 186) **Rob Bowe said:**

I failed to mention that I was a DJ at KTOW 102.3 from about 1987 through 1990 or so.

Tim Barraza was station manager, Tony Mills was our program director and we had some great guys doing on-air, Joe Stone, Sabu, Tony Too, Country Kitty (the station cat) Taylor Chance, Chris Hale, Ceasar Vitalas, Sanchez and JT (God rest his soul, passed away in the mid 90's).

I had dated Rob Wilson's little sister and since he had long passed away, she gave me the informal permission to use, close to his on air name, "Rob on the Radio". I started there to fill in for "Doc" James' (Local Hero fame) Reggae show on Sunday evenings when the station was still AM only on 1340.

I brought in a friend, Ben Griffin and created a pair of characters named Raul and Paul, the "Rasta Twins". We claimed to have come from the New York area after running into a "Natty Dread Rasta" in a grocery store and converting to Rastafarianism, moved to Tulsa to MC the Rasta Twins Radio Show, spinning Reggae and intercutting it with zany fake commercials and wacky on-air antics.

We conjured up many fictional businesses affiliated with our supposed "stardom" in the Reggae industry, one of which was the Rasta Twins Family Rasta-raunt. (Featuring the Little Ziggy, the Rita or the Big Bob Burger!) We then added two old farts named Lawrence T. Redbird and Quincy Frisco Guthrie, (Hmmm, now where did that name come from?) who would come in now and then from their home in a retirement center to add their take on the scene. I still have quite a bit of air checks and those fake commercials on tape, I should rip them to MP3 and let you post some, IMHO they were hilarious!

After we added the FM tower and 102.3 was born, in addition to regular shifts, I created a show called, "Music From Another Point of View", where on Wednesday nights I had from 9 to midnight to spin anything I wanted (unheard of now). The first hour was always modern jazz, 2nd hour would go into more avant-garde stuff and by midnight I was playing really cerebral, trippy stuff. I garnered quite a nice set of listeners, David Bagsby (just as his prolific recording career was starting out, he invited me over to his house to see the Roland D-50 he just shelled out his hard earned \$\$\$ for) for one, and a lot of TU students studying for school, who all supported and helped feed the fire by calling and suggesting music. 90% of the music on that show was completely unknown to 90% of most Tulsans and I absolutely LOVED doing it. This was truly free-form radio and probably Tulsa's last station to do so. I grew up in the 60's and was a big fan of [KTBA](#) and the first few years of KMOD, guys like "Hummingbird" and the original "Rob on Your Radio", "Album Oriented Radio", so I was living a dream.

I also did a short lived LIVE (without a delay!!!) talk show called "Nitelite" with Rex Brown (The Insects, Radio Milan and later Maduko fame) which used to scare the pants off of station manager Tim Baraza.

Wacky banter from Rex and I and KTOW's underground listeners. It was always on the edge of collapse. Rex did a character that was supposed to be an all-seeing psychic named "Pierre Beyondee" (look hopefully for Beyondee's return on "Red Dirt Round-Up") and we always had lots of those fake commercials to cut to in case of someone trying to slip something obscene onto the airwaves! Believe me, I had to keep one finger on the phone line fader at all times!

KTOW AM 1340 and FM 102.3 was a high point in my life and it is a shame that, just as our ratings started to show real promise up against the likes of KMOD, KRMG and all those "big dogs", that we were shelved and the station changed formats. There will NEVER again be anything like it!!!



[KTOW discussion on Facebook with some of the creators.](#)



[Radio Milan remembers the zebra-striped era on MySpace.](#)

(from GB 136) **Don Cook said:**

Hot off the press: A pic from the "Almost 30 Year Reunion" of the [KTBA](#), KMOD, KKUL, **KTOW** Air Staff (1973-1979) at the Deadtown Bar, Tulsa on 06/06/03.

(Left to right) Brad Zimmerman, Cecil Norris, John Moore, Stacy Richardson, and Don Cook.



A grand occasion for some of Tulsa's nicest old hippies. Not present: Charlie Derek and Brian Gill. Deceased: Scott Yates, Rob Wilson, and Bob (Strider) Edwards.

(from Guestbook 136) **Larry L. Kraus said:**

I was just noticing the **picture of the reunion** of folks from KTBA, KMOD, KKUL, and **KTOW**.

I was at KTOW from 1968 until mid-1970 (at that time we played country, except for a short time when we had country during the day and soul at night; a somewhat surrealistic combination). At that time, our program director was a guy named Arthur Johnson. Art had formerly been News Director at KAKC (known there as Jay Arthur). Does anyone know where Art is these days? I have tried to find him on a couple of visits to Tulsa, but can't locate him.

[Ted Terry](#) worked as a DJ at KTOW in 1969 in the schizoid country/soul format.

(from GB 309) **Billy G. Spradlin said:**

Saw the [article on KTOW](#). I barely remember this station, it never had a good signal while growing up in Bartlesville in the 70s.

A couple years ago I found an old 70s vintage KTOW survey from their R&B days on eBay. I put it on

my Flickr gallery here:



(from Guestbook 136) **Sonny Hollingshead** said:

Dean Kelly was Dean Jenkins' moniker while at [KELi](#). He had worked at **KTOW** prior to that. He later worked for Clear Channel in sales, and was last heard on the air at Bill Payne's Classic Country **KTFX**, 102.3, Sand Springs (*formerly **KTOW-FM**, as noted above*) before Payne sold the station to Cox.

Dean's son is local country vocalist **Brandon Jenkins**.

(from Guestbook 20) **Michael Bates** said:

On another radio topic: Someone mentioned **Hal O'Halloran's** post-KTUL-TV career. I was among the regular listeners and callers to Hal O'Halloran's radio sports talk shows on various stations in the late '70s and early '80s. He was on **KXXO** 1300 every weeknight from 6:20-7:00 (they ran CBS Radio's "The World Tonight" with Douglas Edwards from 6:00 - 6:15). KXXO was then a news/talk station, a sister station to KMOD, sharing space in the City Bank building near 31st & Hudson. (Hal did sports updates for KMOD as well.) I started listening in '78 -- his weekly trivia programs usually offered the hope of winning Roughnecks or Ice Oilers tickets. [Ken Broo](#) was a regular guest. The show never had the audience of its rival on KRMG, but the talk was always more interesting, more opinionated, and more focused on the national pro sports scene instead of being fixated on the Dallas Cowboys and the Sooners.

Sometime around 1980 or '81, KXXO changed formats (to **KBBJ** -- big band and jazz), and Hal turned up on **KTOW 1340** in Sand Springs, which was mainly a country music station, but wanted to try its hand at sports. (Great sung news intro: "Worldwide news from the Big Gun (ricochet FX), K-T-O-W.") It had been hard enough to pick up KXXO at night, but KTOW was almost impossible to get in east Tulsa,

especially at night when it dropped to 250 W. (I've owned more powerful light bulbs.)

One thing that stood out about Hal was his patience, especially his patience with certain regular callers, a group of high school kids and immature young adults who called themselves the **Sackheads**, who saw his show as much as an opportunity for comedy as for serious sports discussion.

More about Hal from Michael in [Guestbook 20](#).



(from Guestbook 100) **Ken Broo said:**

One of the stars in the movie "O Brother Where Art Thou" is Tulsan **Tim Blake Nelson**, probably well known back in Oklahoma. Tim went to Holland Hall High School, then onto Brown University and eventually Julliard in NYC.

What a lot of people don't know is that Tim actually made his acting "debut" at the Tulsa Civic Center and on Hal O'Halloran's sports talk show on **KTOW**.

Blake and some of his Holland Hall buddies would frequent Tulsa Ice Oilers hockey games. With the team, being dreadful at the time, the boys from HH would wear bags over their heads, much like the New Orleans 'Aints fans of the 1980's. They were known as the "**Sackheads**".

Hal picked up on this and had Blake and his buddies on his show frequently. I knew 'em all, too. Never knew one of them would reach Hollywood. But, then again, no one probably thought I'd reach [Cincinnati](#)!

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